

# Individual Consultancy: Costing for full coverage of early childhood education (ECE)



**Contract modality:** Consultant contract

**Section:** Education AND Policy and Public Finance for Children

**Duty station:** Phnom Penh, Cambodia  , home-based  , or hybrid

**Duration:** 5 months between 19 June to 17 September 2023

## 1. Background

Pre-primary education sets the stage for a positive transformation in learning outcomes throughout a child's lifetime, benefiting children, families, society, and country at large. Proven in numerous studies, children attending pre-school not only attain higher learning achievement, but also integrate into the society and the world of work at their latter stage of life better than their peers. Professor Heckman and colleagues find net gain or 13% return on investment (ROI) for comprehensive, high-quality, birth-to-five early education. This ROI, representing high-quality, comprehensive programs from birth to five, is substantially higher than the 7-10% return previously established for preschool programs serving 3- to 4-year-olds<sup>1</sup>.

Despite recent progress in access to pre-primary education globally, more than 50% of preschool age children are missing out on pre-primary schooling opportunities and in low-income countries, only 2 in 10 children are enrolled in early education. A critical barrier to universal access to pre-primary education under SDG 4.2<sup>2</sup> is the lack of political will to prioritize the pre-primary subsector. Indeed, investment in pre-primary education is grossly inadequate whereby low and lower-middle income countries spent only 2% and 6.5% of education budget respectively on pre-primary education. The COVID-19 pandemic has further limited education investments (both nationally and globally), with the ECE subsector being most often left out of financing decisions. With the current speed of progress, by 2030 the lower middle-income country would not even have half of the children aged 3-5 attend pre-school education. Under its Global Education Strategy (2019-2030), UNICEF has identified early childhood education (ECE) as one of its priority areas and strategic shifts to address the global learning crisis at its roots.

Human resource development is one of the top policy priorities as mentioned in the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) political platform, Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, and National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023. Cambodia became lower middle-income economy in 2015 and RGC has a vision of achieving upper middle-income economy by 2030, and high-income economy by 2050. To implement this policy over the medium-term horizon, Ministry of Education, Youths and Sports developed the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

Following the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 particularly on student's inclusive and equitable access to education and learning outcome, the Royal Government of Cambodia revised the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030 in 2022. Based on the revised list of CSDG indicators and targets, the RGC

<sup>1</sup> <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/13-roi-toolbox/>

<sup>2</sup> CSDG 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

aims to achieve 82.8% of grade 1 student pupil with ECE experiences (CSDG goal 4.2.1) and 51.8% of gross enrolment ratio pre-primary (CSDG goal 4.2.2) by 2030. The enrolment rate of 5-year-old children has improved from 58% in 2018 to more than 60% in 2019-2020 school years, then slightly dropped in 2021 and 2022 due to adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The gross enrolment rate of children aged 3-5 years in all forms also set back from 35.8% in 2018 to 33.63% in 2022, which is even lower than the global average 42.4% of the same income group country. The number of pre-school establishments increased remarkably over time. By 2022 there are 8,334 preschools of all kinds, of which 4,563 are public preschools, 688 are private, and 3,083 are community preschools (CPS), including 1,250 standard CPS. CPS are located in 1,053 out of the 1,652 communes/Sangkats. Policy and financial commitment play vital role to scale up the quality ECE; Cambodia is not an exception in this case.

All girls and boys, particularly young children aged 3-5, should have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education by 2030 so that children are prepared for primary education. In current country programme 2019-2023, UNICEF supports the Royal Government and other partners to give all children equitable and inclusive access to education so that Cambodian children can embark on a life-long learning journey. UNICEF together with other partners continually mobilize resources and advocate for more government budget allocation in key interventions that contribute to improve students inclusive and equitable access to education and learning outcome such as teacher training, positive parenting, curriculum development and school teaching and learning materials.

In line with the RGC priority in investing in human resource development which is key to support Cambodia to become upper middle income country and high income country by 2030 and 2050 accordingly and to support the Royal Government of Cambodia to achieve CSDG targets and full coverage of pre-primary school education by 2030, UNICEF intended to commission a study to conduct fiscal analysis and produce costing options to inform policy discussion and decision making process to accelerate achievement of full ECE coverage by 2030.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this consultancy is to inform education planning and budget advocacy through producing evidence on fiscal space and costing options for scaling up ECE toward achieving full coverage by 2030 or earlier. The consultancy will contribute to advancing UNICEF's advocacy and ambition of universal access to at least one year of quality ECE for all children, as well as to the development of practical tools to support the government in articulating their financing commitment and framework for ECE to meet or exceed the SDG 4.2 target ahead of 2030 with affordable cost.

### **Objective**

The main objective of this consultancy is to produce costing options and report toward reaching full coverage (100%) of early childhood education for children aged 5 years and 3 – 5 years.

### **Scope of the Exercise**

This costing options exercise focuses mainly on government budget options at national and sub-national level; however, the role of private sector shall be mentioned in the report based on literature review and existing data sets.

While the costing aims at full coverage of children below 6 years of age by 2030, different options will be explored with children aged 3-5 and children aged 5 years interacting by different relevant parameters at varying degree of target. The costing exercise thus will involve multiple costing options and extensive consultations with key partners particularly Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and General Secretariat of National Committee for Early Childhood Care and Development (GS of ECCD) and provincial departments of education, youth and sports, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Economy and Finance. The options shall

consider transition plan and phase approach depending on available fiscal space toward reaching full ECE coverage prior to CSDG 2030 or by CSDG 2030.

### 3. Work Assignments

Working with the Education Section and Social Policy of UNICEF, the consultant will provide technical expertise and support on developing the costing options for scaling up of ECE to meet CSDG 4.2. The consultant is responsible to implement the following tasks:

#### Inception Phase

- Conduct desk review on relevant policies, strategies, guidelines, plans and reports underlying ECE and ECCD
- Conduct fiscal analysis for available fiscal space toward reaching ECE coverage targets as stated in CSDG 2016-2030
- Capitalize existing ECE costing and planning tools, which includes but not limited to the UNICEF led global toolkit on analysis and planning (the ECE Accelerator), an innovative partnership and knowledge initiative for planning early childhood education (BELDS approach), and the UNESCO's ECCE costing model
- Develop draft inception report based on the desk review including proposed costing model and template
- Provide at least one presentation on proposed draft costing model and inception report to UNICEF, MoEYS/ECE Department and ECCD GS, General Department of Administration of MoI and General Department of Budget (GDB)/Budget Formulation Department and General Department of Sub-National Administration Finance (GDSNAF) of MEF
- Produce final draft inception report

#### Data collection process and producing costing options

- Develop costing model and conduct costing options taking into account ECE parameters of varied scenarios and targets as well as fiscal space analysis. The costing model should be presented in user friendly EXCEL spreadsheet that allows some degree of flexibility in the changing parameters. The costing options include full ECE coverage for 5 years and 3-5 years and the options of expansion through CPS, Standard CPS and State Pre-Schools, including the support to preschool teacher development as well (e.g: expansion of pre-service preschool teacher training). Phase and transition approach between CPS and State Pre-Schools should be explored. The costing options shall explore CSDG indicators and targets 2030 and full coverage (100%) by 2030
- Collect data and conduct interviews with key stakeholders to clarify, confirm, and adjust key parameters, and desirable costing outputs building on the draft costing model. Stakeholders include key focal points of the UNICEF, MoEYS/ECCD General Secretariat and Department of ECE, Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sports (PoEYS), District Office of Education, Youth and Sports, Commune/Sangkat Administration, and pre-school teachers/directors (CPS, standard CPS, and state pre-school)
- Produce first draft realistic costing options and first draft report based on data collection and consultation with relevant stakeholders Generate budget framework for MoEYS and PoEYS entailing program budget and budget lines
- Provide two presentations and collect inputs/comments on the first draft costing options to UNICEF, CDPF partners, MoEYS/ECE Department and ECCD GS, PoEYS, General Department of Administration of MoI and General Department of Budget (GDB)/Budget Formulation Department and General Department of Sub-National Administration Finance (GDSNAF) of MEF

#### Finalization

- Produce final costing options and report based on comments/inputs from relevant stakeholders.
- Provide two presentations on the final draft costing options and report to UNICEF, CDPF partners, MoEYS/ECE Department and ECCD GS, PoEYS, General Department of Administration of MoI and General Department of Budget (GDB)/Budget Formulation Department and General Department of Sub-National Administration Finance (GDSNAF) of MEF

#### 4. Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](#)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES  NO

If YES, check all that apply:

▪ **Direct contact role**  YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

**Child data role**  YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

#### 5. Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required

##### The qualifications, skills, and experience

- At least master's degree in the field of Economics or Finance or related social sciences with a major focus on budget planning, or relevant major
- A minimum of five years of relevant professional work experience at national and/or sub-national levels in budget planning, preferably cross-sector budget planning
- Medium/Advanced skill in cost modeling using Microsoft Excel and other modeling program
- Proven experiences in development of cross-sector or sectoral costing for cross-sectoral national action plan, preferably related to the sectors of education, child protection, health, social protection, and/or other social science fields
- Excellent knowledge of Government Budgeting and costing system, preferably in the sectors of education and social ministries
- Excellent knowledge on cross-sector budget planning and financing, preferably at sub-national and departmental level
- Sound knowledge of the education sector in Cambodia or South-East Asian countries

##### Competencies

- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Excellent organizational and facilitation skills
- Ability to work under pressure, meet tight deadlines, paying close attention to details and quality of work
- Proven good interpersonal and communication skills

##### Languages

- Fluency in written and spoken English and Khmer

#### 6. Location

The consultant will work from his/her own premises. In case there is a request to access UNICEF premises, prior notice and approval are required. To access MoEYS premises, particularly ECCD General Secretariat, the consultant may make an advance request to MoEYS ECCD General Secretariat.

The consultant will travel to at least three provinces to collect data from at least nine selected community pre-schools (CPS) run by communes/Sangkats, nine standard pre-schools recognized by MoEYS, and nine state pre-schools. This data collection involves conducting face to face interviews and clarification with commune/sangkat councilors and/or clerks, district offices of education, and the PoEs in the three provinces. The three provinces shall be selected based on concentration of CPS, standard CPS, and state pre-schools while the selection of these schools shall be done in consultation with the relevant PoEYS.

## 7. Duration

The assignment will extend for a period of 5 months, between 19 June and 17 November 2023.

## 8. Deliverables

The consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables to achieve the aforementioned purpose.

No.	Description of Activities & Outputs	Reference number of working days	Period
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk review of ECE related strategy and ECE tools</li> <li>• Inception report in Ms. Word (max.15 pages) and costing model in EXCEL (max.15 sheets)</li> <li>• Provide presentation in Ms. Power Point and Ms. Excel (costing model) to UNICEF, MoEYS/ECCD Secretariat, MoI and MEF to collect comments and inputs on the draft costing model</li> </ul>	10	June-July 2023
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection from three provinces</li> <li>• Consultation meeting with UNICEF, MoEYS (ECE Department &amp; ECCD GS), MoI, and MEF</li> <li>• Produce first draft preliminary costing options in Ms. Excel</li> <li>• Provide presentation in Ms. Power Point and Ms. Excel (costing model) to UNICEF, PoEYS, MoEYS/ECCD Secretariat, MoI, and MEF to collect comments and inputs on the draft</li> </ul>	25	July-August 2023
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce update draft costing options in Ms. Excel based on comments/inputs from relevant stakeholders and produce first draft report in Ms. Word (15 pages) including propose budget implementation framework to reaching full ECE coverage in Ms. Word</li> <li>• Provide two presentations on costing options and draft report to UNICEF, MoEYS/ECCD secretariat, MoI, and MEF to collect comments and inputs on the draft</li> </ul>	10	August-September 2023
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize costing options in EXCEL (18 sheets) and report in Ms. Words inclusive of budget implementation framework to reaching full ECE coverage in Ms. Word</li> <li>• Provide presentation on final costing options and report in Ms. Power Point (20 pages) and Ms. Excel to UNICEF, PoEYS, MoEYS/ECCD Secretariat, MoI, and MEF</li> </ul>	10	September-October 2023
Total		55	5 months

## 9. Reporting Requirements

- Preliminary report: Inception report in Ms. Words (maximum 15 pages in English), and PPT (maximum 20 pages in English) and Costing model in Ms. EXCEL to be submitted latest by July 03, 2023 or two weeks after signing contract.
- First Draft Costing options: Produce first draft preliminary costing options in Ms. Excel and provide presentation in Ms. Power Point and Ms. Excel (costing model) to UNICEF, PoEYS, MoEYS/ECCD

Secretariat, Mol, and MEF to collect comments and inputs on the draft latest by August 18, 2023 or 9 weeks after signing contract.

- **First Draft Report:** First draft report in Ms. Words (maximum 15 pages in English), and PPT (maximum 20 pages in English), costing model in Ms. EXCEL (18 sheets) and slide presentation in Ms. Power Point to be submitted at the latest by September 15, 2023 or 13 weeks after signing contract. The report shall include the proposed budget implementation framework in Ms. EXCEL entailing the program budget and budget line of MoEYS/PoEYS, and Commune/Sangkat budget.
- **Final Draft Report:** Finalized costing options in Ms. EXCEL and final report in Words (15 pages), and PPT and PPT (maximum 20 pages in English) to be submitted by September 13, 2023 or 17 weeks after signing contract. The report shall include the budget implementation framework in Ms. EXCEL entailing the program budget and budget line of MoEYS/PoEYS, and Commune/Sangkat budget.

## **10. Payment Schedule linked to deliverables**

The payment will be made in 4 instalments against the deliverables listed above as follows:

- 20% upon satisfactory completion of deliverable #1
- 30% upon satisfactory completion of deliverable #2
- 30% upon satisfactory completion of deliverable #3
- 20% upon satisfactory completion of deliverable #4

## **11. Administrative Issues**

The consultant will be based at his/her own premise. The consultant must have their own facility and equipment to produce the above deliverables. UNICEF will not provide any facility and equipment to the consultant to conduct the work assignments. MoEYS/ECCD GS with technical support from UNICEF will provide administrative support to facilitate the field data collection and interview with relevant stakeholders at national level and at the designated sub-national level. The consultant will be invited to make a presentation face to face or through virtual arrangement.

The consultant is expected to travel in the country for a maximum of 20 days to collect data, conduct interviews and consultations with relevant stakeholders. In-country travel to complete the assignment must be clearly identified and budgeted and consultants shall be required to include the cost of in-country travel (i.e. accommodation, meals and incidentals) in the financial proposal.

## **12. Contract supervisor**

This consultancy will be under overall supervision of a UNICEF Education Specialist. The consultant will liaise day-to-day technical work with UNICEF Social Policy Specialist on technical matters related to the costing exercise. Any change or amendment to the scope of this consultancy shall be discussed with and approved by UNICEF, and duly reflected in the corresponding contract.

## **13. Nature of 'Penalty Clause' to be Stipulated in Contract**

Unsatisfactory performance: In case of unsatisfactory performance the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent five (5) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a total period of less than two (2) months, and ten (10) business days prior to the termination date in the case of contracts for a longer period

Performance indicators: Consultants' performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, quality, and relevance/feasibility of recommendations for UNICEF Cambodia.

## **14. Submission of applications**

Interested candidates are kindly requested to apply and upload the following documents:

- CV or Resume
- Report on previous relevant qualitative study
- Technical Proposal that entails the qualification of the consultant, proposed methodology, question guide, workplan, and outline of the report.
- Financial proposal: All-inclusive lump-sum cost including:
  - Consultancy daily fee
  - Medical insurance (health and accidental death, medical evacuation) for the entire duration of the contract.
  - Expected cost associated to field data collection in three provinces

## 15. Assessment Criteria

A two-stage procedure shall be utilized in evaluating proposals, with evaluation of the technical proposal being completed prior to any price proposal being compared. The Contract shall be awarded to candidate obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores, subject to the satisfactory result of the verification interview.

Applications shall therefore contain the following required documentation:

1. Technical Proposal, including a cover letter, updated CV, and copies of 2 relevant evaluations performed earlier by the consultant(s). No financial information should be contained in the technical proposal.
2. Financial Proposal: Lump-sum offer with the cost breakdown: Consultancy fee, travel costs to provinces (to be designated, per-diem to cover lodging, meals, and any other cost related to the consultant's stay in provinces (to be designated).

For evaluation and selection method, the Cumulative Analysis Method (weight combined score method) will be used for this recruitment:

- a) Technical Qualification (max. 100 points) weight 70 %
- Qualification and experiences (30 points)
  - Knowledge and Skills (30 points)
  - Competencies (20 points)
  - Quality of past work (e.g., understanding, methodology) (20 points)

- b) Financial Proposal (max. 100 points) weight 30 %

The maximum number of points shall be allotted to the lowest Financial Proposal that is opened /evaluated and compared among those technical qualified candidates who have attained a minimum 70 points score in the technical evaluation. Other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

## 16. Programme Area, Outputs and Specific Key Results Areas in the Rolling Work Plan 2022-2023

Section Requesting: Education Section

Outcome 2: By 2023, girls and boys, particularly the rural and urban poor, have increased access to inclusive, equitable, relevant, and quality early childhood and basic education that promotes lifelong learning, including in emergencies.

Output 2: By 2023 school leaders and teachers have enhanced capacity to deliver equitable, inclusive, relevant, and quality education in safe learning environments.

Key result area 2.1: The provision of inclusive early childhood education (ECE) services is enhanced and quality improved.

Activity 2.1.1 Support MoEYS at national level to expand quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) service provision, including rolling out to sub-national level the revised CPS curriculum, the guidance on annexing CPS to public school, and cost simulation for universal ECE among children aged 5 years.

The study is also part of Policy and Public Financing for Children Section workplan:

Outcome 5: By 2023, children and adolescents in Cambodia, including the most deprived benefit from effective social services and child-sensitive social protection system

Output 2: Capacity of social ministries and sub-national administrations for programme-based budget formulation, execution, monitoring, and reporting strengthened addressing multi-dimensional child poverty by 2023

Key result Area 5.2.5: Increased use of evidence to inform policy and budget allocation for children

Activity 5.2.5.2: Provide technical assistance and support to building the capacities of the selected line ministries and institutions responsible for social assistance to develop adequate/high-quality results-based frameworks (PIB Formulation and Execution Manual and training) in support of programme-based budget formulation, execution and reporting benefiting children